CHAPTER 30:

THE BISQUE DOLL'S TEARS (PART 1)

ART BY ICHIHA AKIZUKI

WRITTEN BY MAI MOCHIZUKI

CHARACTER DESIGNS BY SHIZU YAMAUCHI

There sits an antique shop along Kyoto's Teramachi Sanjo...

...by the name of "Kura."

Shino tea bowls, the pride of the Momoyama period.

Ko-Kutani dishes.

Ming Dynasty vases.

Owned by Yagashira Seiji, a state licensed appraiser,

it carries all manner of pieces in all manner of styles.

THE CURIOS HERE ARE ALL SO LOVELY.

I NEVER GROW TIRED OF LOOKING AT THEM.

I never thought I'd find myself so enchanted by antiques.

Before I started working here...

There's one item I *really* don't like.

That said...

Being surrounded by all these wonderful things every day...

I just love it!

It's over a hundred years old.

A porcelain figure known as a bisque doll.

IT JUST CREEPS ME OUT.

IT'S BEAU-TIFULLY MADE...

...PLAY WITH ME...

AND IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S *TRYING* TO SCARE ME, POOR THING...

STILL, PRETTYING HER UP IS PART OF MY JOB.

WON'T YOU PLEASE...

...PLAY WITH ME?

PHEW...

HOLMES-SAN!

YOU APPEARED A BIT TENSE.

BWAH?!

IS THAT THE VOICE YOU FANCY HEARING?

DO YOU HAVE AN AVERSION TO THIS DOLL, AOI-SAN?

YEAH... I DO.

TO BE HONEST, IT SCARES ME A LITTLE.

I MEAN, IT'S LOVELY. BUT...

THERE'S JUST SOMETHING DESOLATE ABOUT IT.

YOU SEE, THIS DOLL WAS ORIGINALLY PART OF A PAIR.

AH.

BUT THE GIRL DOLL MADE ITS WAY TO THIS SHOP ALONE.

PERHAPS THAT'S WHY IT STRIKES YOU THAT WAY.

SURE!

I'll make coffee.

WHY DON'T WE TAKE A LITTLE BREAK?

It still tastes so bitter...

I WANTED TO ASK YOU SOMETHING, HOLMES-SAN.

BY THE WAY...

OH?

IT'S JUST THAT A FRIEND OF MINE IS COMING FROM SAITAMA TO VISIT KYOTO SOON.

IT'S NOTHING SERIOUS.

AND...

I'M SUPPOSED TO PLAY THE LOCAL GUIDE ON A TOUR OF THE CITY.

HMM...

IT'S HARD TO NARROW IT DOWN!

YOU'VE TAKEN ME SO MANY PLACES AND I LOVE THEM ALL.

HAS YOUR FRIEND BEEN TO KYOTO BEFORE?

NO, ACTUALLY.

PROBABLY HALF A DAY.

HOW LONG DOES YOUR FRIEND HAVE TO SIGHTSEE?

"ROYAL ROAD"?

THEN I THINK ROYAL ROAD WOULD BE BEST.

YOU CAN WALK THE WHOLE WAY.

BUT IT SHOULD GIVE A PROPER SENSE OF THE MAGNIFICENCE OF KYOTO.

I SEE. THAT MIGHT BE NICE...

YASAKA SHRINE

IT TAKES YOU FROM YASAKA SHRINE TO KIYOMIZU-DERA,

AS WELL AS AROUND GION.

KIYOMIZU TEMPLE

GION

I HAVEN'T BEEN TO KIYOMIZU-DERA MYSELF IN SOME TIME.

I'D ALSO LIKE TO ENSURE YOUR FRIEND HAS A GOOD TIME IN KYOTO.

OH!

W-WOULD YOU MIND?

WOULD YOU LIKE ME TO GIVE YOU THE TOUR BEFORE-HAND?

JUST THE TWO OF US...

IT'S BEEN A WHILE SINCE HOLMES-SAN AND I WENT OUT TOGETHER...

SO, HOW ABOUT NEXT SATURDAY?

SURE.

N-NO!

IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?

YOU HAVE?

I'VE BEEN KINDA STRESSED ABOUT HAVING TO PLAY TOUR GUIDE.

I WAS ACTUALLY HOPING YOU WOULD SHOW ME AROUND.

WHEW

I'M SO GLAD.

MAKOTO'S GOING TO LOVE THIS.

JUST BECAUSE I LIVE IN KYOTO, PEOPLE THINK I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT IT...

Ah.

I KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN.

Mako ...?

R- RING

AOI-SAN.

BY ANY CHANCE, IS THIS FRIEND OF YOURS—

WELCOME.

That Satur-day...

...

GOOD MORNING, AOI-SAN.

THA-THUMP

THA-THUMP

THAT SMILE OF HIS IS BAD FOR MY HEART...

IT'S MY PLEASURE.

GOOD MORNING, HOLMES-SAN. THANKS FOR SHOWING ME AROUND.

IT'S ALWAYS THIS WAY AT YASAKA SHRINE.

BUT IT'S PRETTY CROWDED TODAY TOO.

THERE WERE LOTS OF PEOPLE FOR OUR NEW YEAR'S SHRINE VISIT,

PERHAPS HE DRAWS PEOPLE HERE.

AND ITS PRIMARY DEITY, SUSANOO-NO-MIKOTO, IS A MAGNANIMOUS AND LIVELY GOD.

IT'S THE CENTRAL TEMPLE OF GION, AN ICON OF KYOTO.

WELL, SHALL WE HEAD TO KIYOMIZU-DERA?

WE CAN LEAVE THROUGH THE SOUTHERN GATE AND FOLLOW THE ROAD THERE.

NOW... HAVE YOU BEEN TO KIYOMIZU-DERA, AOI-SAN?

YES. BUT ONLY ONCE ON A MIDDLE SCHOOL FIELD TRIP.

WE TOOK A BUS THERE, THOUGH... I didn't know the lay of the land at all.

WHEN YOU'RE ON A FIELD TRIP, YOU DON'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME TO EXPLORE THE AREA...

SO THIS IS MY FIRST TIME COMING THIS WAY.

八坂カフェ

DOESN'T IT?

THAT FIVE-STORY PAGODA JUST COMES OUT OF NOWHERE!

WOW!

YOU'RE CLIMBING THIS NARROW, UPHILL ROAD...

AND THE GRAND TOWER OF YASAKA JUST APPEARS.

IT'S WHY I RECOMMENDED THIS ROUTE.

BUT THE TOWER OF YASAKA IS PRETTY FAR FROM YASAKA SHRINE, ISN'T IT?

YES, YOU SEE...

I'LL DEFINITELY BRING MY FRIEND THIS WAY TOO.

THE PAGODA ACTUALLY BELONGS TO HOKAN-JI TEMPLE.

BUT SINCE IT FACES THE STREET OF YASAKA-DORI, IT'S CALLED THE TOWER OF YASAKA.

I HAD NO IDEA.

SPEAKING OF NAMES,

I READ THAT THIS ROAD, SANNENZAKA, IS ALSO CALLED "SANNEIZAKA."

I looked up some stuff yesterday.

*808 AD

AND SO SOME CALLED THE HILL SANNEIZAKA, "TO PRAY FOR A CHILD'S BIRTH."

TOYOTOMI HIDEYOSHI'S WIFE NENE ONCE CAME TO KIYOMIZU TEMPLE TO PRAY FOR A CHILD.

AS FOR ITS OTHER NAME...

SOME BELIEVE SANNENZAKA, OR "THREE-YEAR HILL," REFERS TO WHEN IT WAS BUILT: THE THIRD YEAR OF THE DAIDO ERA.

I GUESS WHEN YOU'RE AROUND LONG ENOUGH, PEOPLE COME UP WITH ALL KINDS OF NAMES FOR YOU, HUH?

I SEE...

NINENZAKA AND SANNENZAKA ARE FULL OF TASTEFUL CAFES, MARKET STALLS, AND SOUVENIR SHOPS.

IT'S A PERFECT PLACE FOR SIGHTSEEING.

INCIDENTALLY, NINENZAKA, "TWO-YEAR HILL," IS CALLED THAT BECAUSE IT'S RIGHT NEXT TO SANNENZAKA.

THAT'S PRETTY STRAIGHT-FORWARD.

THIS IS THE MAIN GATE OF KIYOMIZU-DERA, THE NIOMON GATE.

KIYOMIZU-DERA IS REALLY SOMETHING.

EVEN THE ROAD HERE WAS BUSY.

BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE SO BUSTLING WHEN IT WASN'T A HOLIDAY.

I'VE BEEN TO A LOT OF SHRINES AND TEMPLES...

THAT'S TRUE.

THIS PLACE RADIATES ENERGY, NO MATTER WHEN YOU COME.

YOU MAY KNOW THIS ALREADY, AOI-SAN...

BUT THE PROTRUSION FROM THE MAIN HALL IS KNOWN AS "THE STAGE OF KIYOMIZU."

IT WAS CREATED WITH AN ANCIENT JAPANESE CRAFTING METHOD CALLED KAKEZUKURI, WHICH DOESN'T USE NAILS.

THE TECHNOLOGY USED TO BUILD IT IS AN ART FORM IN ITSELF.

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD ANYONE TALK ABOUT "JUMPING OFF THE STAGE OF KIYOMIZU"?

THAT REFERS TO AN OLD BELIEF THAT LEAPING FROM IT AND SURVIVING WOULD GRANT A WISH.

Records indicate that over two hundred attempted it in the Edo period.

PEOPLE REALLY JUMPED ?!

THAT'D KILL YOU FOR SURE!

3

THE SURVIVAL RATE WAS SURPRISINGLY HIGH AT AROUND 80 PERCENT.

There were probably more trees here back then.

IT'S JUST A TESTAMENT TO HOW STRONGLY PEOPLE BELIEVED IN KIYOMIZU-DERA.

IS THAT BECAUSE OF THE ARTISTRY OF ITS CONSTRUCTION?

HOLMES-SAN, YOU MENTIONED ONCE THAT KIYOMIZU-DERA IS YOUR FAVORITE TEMPLE.

BUT IT ALSO FEELS LIKE KYOTO IN MINIATURE TO ME.

THAT'S PART OF IT.

ITS MAGNIFICENT AND VAGUELY FRIGHTENING HISTORY.

THE BEAUTY OF THE TEMPLE ITSELF.

ALL OF THAT COMES TOGETHER

VIEWS OF AN ANCIENT PAST.

AND GLIMPSES INTO THE LIVES OF THOSE WHO ARE HERE NOW.

I THINK THAT'S WHAT SEIZES THE HEARTS OF SO MANY PEOPLE, MYSELF INCLUDED.

I THINK IT'S REALLY BEAUTI-FUL...

...THAT YOU SEE IT THAT WAY.

MY APOLOGIES FOR RAMBLING.

DID I BORE YOU?

N-NO!

THANK YOU, AOI-SAN.

NOW THAT WE'VE FINISHED OUR TOUR...

OKAY!

THERE'S A CAFÉ I LIKE IN GION,

SO LET'S TAKE A BREATHER THERE.

I-IT'S SO CUTE!

I NEVER KNEW THERE WAS A WESTERN-STYLE CAFÉ LIKE THIS IN GION!

CACAO MARKET HAS A CHOCOLATERIE ON THE FIRST FLOOR. THE CAFÉ IS DOWN-STAIRS.

KYOTO IS WHERE THE EAST MEETS WEST, AFTER ALL.

JUST A MOMENT.

THE CAFÉ ENTRANCE IS HERE.

YOU HAVE TO INPUT THE SECRET CODE TO ENTER.

IS THIS WHAT YOU WENT TO ASK ABOUT?

?

A NUMBER?

HERE YOU ARE.

THIS IS KIND OF EXCITING!

THIS CAFÉ IS CALLED "ANGEL LIBRARY."

THEY SAY THE ANGELS WHO STUDY HARD EVERY DAY TO MAKE DELICIOUS CHOCOLATE FOR EVERY-ONE...

...CONVERTED THEIR OWN LIBRARY INTO A CAFÉ.

IT'S LOVELY!

I'M GLAD YOU LIKE IT.

I FOUND IT ON MY KYOTO CAFÉ TOUR.

I'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO COME BACK TO IT.

YOUR KYOTO CAFÉ TOUR?

AS YOU KNOW, I LOVE CAFÉS.

I'VE BEEN TO NEARLY EVERY SINGLE ONE IN KYOTO.

And taken notes on them, naturally.

Oh?

I'VE NEVER MENTIONED IT?

I ACTUALLY HAD THE IDEA TO TURN KURA INTO AN ANTIQUES CAFÉ AS WELL.

I WANT IT TO BE A MORE INVITING PLACE. SOMEWHERE YOU CAN ENJOY ANTIQUES AT YOUR LEISURE.

THE QUALITY OF WHAT THEY SERVE IS IMPORTANT, OF COURSE.

BUT I JUST ADORE THEIR SETTINGS.

THAT SOUNDS WONDERFUL.

SPARKLE

SPARKLE

YOU CAME HERE ALONE LAST TIME?

HOLMES-SAN, YOU MEAN...

SO I WENT AROUND VARIOUS CAFÉS...

...BOTH FOR MY OWN PERSONAL ENJOYMENT AND RESEARCH.

GIGGLE

THAT'S JUST LIKE HOLMES-SAN.

BESIDES, IT'S EASIER TO TRAVEL AROUND ON YOUR OWN.

MY GENDER IS NO DETERRENT IN REGARDS TO MY HOBBIES.

※ You can get a table for one!

YES, OF COURSE.

BEING ALONE IS EASIER.

I'VE HAD NO PARTICULAR DESIRE TO TRY MY HAND AT LOVE AGAIN.

MOREOVER, YOU KNOW HOW MY LAST RELATIONSHIP ENDED...

ALTHOUGH...

LATELY, I'VE STARTED TO THINK...

...THAT COMING TO PLACES LIKE THIS WITH SOMEONE, EVEN A GIRL-FRIEND...

...WOULDN'T BE SO BAD.

THA-THUMP

WELL...

I'M GLAD TO HEAR THAT.

YOU REALLY SHOULDN'T LET ONE BAD RELATIONSHIP HOLD YOU BACK.

BUT I'M HAPPY TO SEE YOU MORE OPTIMISTIC WHEN IT COMES TO ROMANCE.

I KNOW IT'S NOT REALLY MY PLACE TO SAY SO,

WHAT AM I SAYING?

IF SO, I'LL BE ROOTING FOR YOU.

WAIT...

WHAT...

IS THERE SOMEONE IN PARTICULAR YOU'D LIKE TO COME HERE WITH?

I'M SURE YOU COULD WIN ANYONE YOU SET YOUR HEART ON.

...POUNDING SO LOUD

MY HEART IS...

OH, DON'T SAY THAT!

I WONDER...

IT DOESN'T SEEM TO BE GOING WELL AT THE MOMENT.

BY THE WAY, AOI-SAN...

WHAT?

THIS FRIEND OF YOURS WHO'S GOING TO BE VISITING KYOTO...

IS IT A GUY?

I JUST WASN'T SURE THIS CAFÉ WOULD SUIT A GUY'S TASTES,

SO I WAS WORRIED.

OH, I GUESS MAKOTO *IS* A GENDER-NEUTRAL NAME.

?

MAKOTO'S A GIRL. WHY DO YOU ASK?

I SEE...

ARE THE TWO OF YOU STILL CLOSE?

YES!

MAKOTO AND I WERE IN THE SAME CLUB, AND...

I know I'm not the one Holmes-san wants.

That's why I drew a line.

IF I REALLY FALL FOR HIM...

I KNOW HE'D SEE THROUGH ME.

THAT WOULD MAKE THINGS AWKWARD. I'D HAVE TO QUIT KURA.

AND...

I LIKE IT THERE. I DON'T WANT TO LEAVE.

THAT WAS SUCH A WONDERFUL CAFÉ.

Our chocolate will

NOT AT ALL.

LET'S GO.

MIND IF I BUY SOMETHING AT THE CHOCO-LATERIE?

KIYOTAKA?

THE SHOP ITSELF IS QUITE CHARMING AS WELL.

WELL, I'LL BE!

FANCY MEETIN' YOU HERE.

IT'S BEEN SOME TIME, GRANDMA.

A FRIEND OF THE OWNER'S ?

YES. MY FATHER'S MOTHER. SHE LIVES IN THE AREA.

YOU'RE HOLMES-SAN'S GRANDMA ?!

GI-SAN?!

WAIT! THAT MEANS...

SHE'S THE MANAGER'S MOTHER?

I'M TSUBAKI. PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.

SHE'S THE OWNER'S EX-WIFE?!

CHAPTER 30
END